

Brazil 2015 River Trip Update

Well, I can't believe it but it's been a month since I returned from Brazil. I apologize for the delay in sending you a report of all that God did. First and foremost I'd like to thank everyone for the support you gave through supplies, prayer, and encouragement for this trip. It would not have been possible without it. Let me share with you a couple of impactful moments.

We've learned over the years with our time in Brazil that most of the illnesses are directly related to a lack of clean drinking water. Our church has been using Sawyer Water filters with a number of our partners to combat water borne illnesses over the last few years. We had a plan to use these filters in a couple different villages and at varying levels during our trip. Some villages would get a system that included pumps and water towers while others would consist of a 5 gallon bucket with a water filter attached. Our first day was at a village I had never previously visited called Santa Gracia. Santa Gracia is a typical rural village in Brazil consisting of a few families that make up about 50-100 people living alongside the river. Our project for the day was to create a water filtration system that would include a pump, tower, and distribution point. The villagers knew we were there to install a water system because we had asked them to prepare the site in anticipation of our arrival. I have always been welcomed into a village with smiles and warm greetings but that day was a little different. After we had been there for a few minutes and news of our arrival had started traveling through the village I heard some commotion. When I looked, I saw a man, probably about 70 years old, working his way through our team and hugging each member. The man was greeting us as if we were long lost family; he was almost overwhelmed with joy. It was amazing to see how much this man appreciated what we were doing for his village. I was hit with the reminder that what we are doing is making an impact on people and their quality of life far beyond what we will ever know. Seeing this man's joy and coming to this realization was a brief and subtle moment but one of my most impactful of all my trips.



The other great experience of our trip was the First Aid and CPR training that we provided. We taught about 50 people in 4 different villages CPR/First Aid and then provided them with some basic medical supplies. The training was very well received and everyone who participated was engaged in the training and did a great job following instruction. Approximately thirty of the fifty participants were in healthcare at some level and none of them had ever seen a CPR mannequin. We tried to cover as much material as time and day light allowed but there was so much we could discuss and so much they wanted to learn. The thing I didn't anticipate was how empowering this training would be for both the healthcare providers and the villagers that just wanted to know how to help. There was certainly a new confidence that was evident in each of the students at the end of training. I once again was encouraged by the

appreciation that everyone had for our presence there and the basic needs that can be addressed with a little prayer and support from all of you.

In addition to the CPR training and the water towers our team also put on Vacation Bible School in each of the different villages, provided about 100 chickens as part of a microfinance program, painted 2 houses and a church, and taught English. The primary focus of every trip is to “Go and Make Disciples” and through meeting some of the physical and social needs of the villagers we had the opportunity to share God’s redemptive story of Jesus’ death and resurrection and the salvation offered in him.

Thank you again for your support of this trip, not only for my sake but for the impact that it had on my team and the people of Itapeacu, Terra Preta, Santa Gracia, Villa Silva, and Sao Jose. Every time I go on a mission trip I’m reminded of how blessed I am and how doing even just a little can make a big difference in someone’s life. Moving forward I hope to build off of the CPR training to include other medical and dental training, get access to more advanced medical equipment, and equip locals to continue the training to reach people even more people. I ask that you join me in praying once again for all that God is doing in Brazil and around the World and how we might play a role in that.

God Bless,

Brandon Matheny

